

2005 CROP SUMMARY

The winter of 2005 began with warmer than average temperatures and below average precipitation in the southern two-thirds of the State. Temperatures were near normal with above average precipitation in northern areas. In **January**, temperatures were again above average in much of the State with the exception of northern areas, and precipitation amounts were above monthly averages except in the southwest. During **February**, the southern two-thirds of Minnesota received much needed rain and snow. Temperatures across the State were 2.0 to 8.4 degrees above normal. Precipitation received during **March** generally soaked quickly into the soil with little runoff. The combination of temperatures and precipitation during the winter was such that feed stocks were generally adequate for cattle, and winter crops were not damaged by the cold.

In mid-**April**, the subsoil moisture levels were 71% adequate and 19% surplus Statewide, a great improvement from the same period in 2004 when only 39% of the stations reported adequate and 60% short to very short subsoil moisture levels. Rains during the first half of April delayed the planting of all crops relative to 2004 and the 5-year averages even though temperatures at mid-month were 7 to 10 degrees above average. The above average temperatures continued through the first three weeks of April but then turned much colder for the remainder of the month. Widespread frosts resulted in damage to alfalfa in some areas. Precipitation amounts meanwhile tapered off, allowing some drying of the soil. In spite of cooler temperatures, planting and emergence of small grains and sugarbeets proceeded rapidly and nearly caught up with 5-year averages by the end of the month.

Drier conditions during the first week of **May** allowed planting of most crops to move ahead of the 5-year average, however, colder than average temperatures slowed the emergence of most crops with the exception of oats. A brief warming trend in the first week gave way to cool, rainy weather the second week that slowed both planting and emergence of corn and soybeans. By the end of the third week, small grain emergence was very close to the 5-year average. Widespread rain, coupled with cooler temperatures through the end of May, resulted in a steady increase in the number of stations reporting surplus topsoil moisture. By the end of the month, topsoil moisture supplies were rated as 0% very short, 1% short, 63% adequate, and 36% surplus.

Temperatures warmed up in early **June**, allowing planting to advance rapidly, however, emergence and development of corn was slower than average. Temperatures averaged a few degrees above normal throughout the month of June across most of the State. This favorable situation, coupled with adequate to surplus topsoil moisture conditions, allowed most crops to approach the 5-year averages for emergence and subsequent growth stages by the end of the month.

During the last week of June the favorable conjunction of warm temperatures, adequate moisture, and sunshine resulted in corn growing an average of 11 inches in one week.

July, like June, was notable for above average temperatures, coupled with somewhat drier conditions. After the first week of the month, crop development was increasingly ahead of 5-year averages. By the end of the third week of July, one-third of the State was rated as very short to short in topsoil moisture. The Northwest corner of the State remained very wet through the end of July. Widespread rain toward the end of the month, along with cooler temperatures, improved topsoil moisture. Strong winds caused some lodging of corn and small grains in the West and South Central parts of the State. Small grains harvest ran consistently ahead of 5-year averages during the last half of July.

Hot, dry conditions in early **August** were advantageous for the harvest but stressed many other crops, causing a decline in crop condition even as crop development continued to run well ahead of 5-year averages. The area of very short to short topsoil moisture was found mostly in Central and East Central Minnesota. Harvesting activities were brought to a temporary standstill late in the third week by widespread rains. Rain toward the end of the month again slowed harvest of sweet corn and potatoes but greatly improved topsoil moisture supplies.

September started cool, but for the rest of the month temperatures were consistently above normal. This, together with generally adequate topsoil moisture in most areas, promoted rapid maturing of corn and soybeans. In mid-September, the percent of sugarbeets, dry bean, and sweet corn harvested stayed close to the 5-year average. The first hard frost in the northern counties occurred shortly before September 26.

Rain in early **October** slowed harvest, but mild temperatures encouraged timely maturation of crops. In mid-October, sunny, dry weather over the entire State allowed harvest of both corn and soybeans to run ahead of last year. Moisture content of the two crops was close to 5-year averages. Wet soil conditions in the Northwest slowed sugarbeet and sunflower harvest, but persistent warm and dry conditions over the entire State during the last half of October allowed the corn and soybean harvest to nearly catch up to 5-year averages by the end of the month.

Above average temperatures persisted until mid-**November**, allowing fall tillage and fertilizer operations to move ahead. Over 95% of the corn and sunflower harvest was completed by mid-November, but isolated wet corn fields and a slowdown of the drying process delayed the completion of harvest in some areas of the State.

Above average temperatures continued through **December** in the northern districts while temperatures were slightly below normal in the south. Adequate snow cover was reported in most areas and feed supplies were adequate to sustain livestock through the winter months.